

NEWS

and Information

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter from the Premier Trainer of Federal, State and Local Government Professionals

July/August 2002

**MARK YOUR
CALENDARS**
for the annual
**Faculty Excellence
Awards Ceremony**
on **September 12**
in **Washington, D.C.**

programs

Upcoming Events and Programs at the Graduate School, USDA

On **July 24, 2002**, the Graduate School will sponsor an **education fair** at the Department of Agriculture's South Building from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Come meet our continuing education academic team and learn about our partnerships with other organizations. For more information, contact Audrey Orteza at (202) 314-3653.

In May, NBC News filmed a Graduate School **"Spanish on the Hill"** class and interviewed the congressional representatives who participated. The segment will air at a future date.

Stop by and see the Graduate School's exhibit at the **annual Blacks in Government (BIG) Conference** in Atlanta on August 26-30.

Visit the Graduate School's exhibit (505) at the conference, **Excellence in Government 2002: New Focus, New Priorities**, in Washington, D.C. on July 15-17. The Graduate School is also a lanyard sponsor of the conference. For more information, contact the *Government Executive* magazine's Web site at www.GovExec.com.

Get a new perspective on career success at the following workshops: **The 2002 Residential Professional Seminar** in New Orleans on July 31-August 2, sponsored by the Southeast Training Center, (214) 767-8245; **The Professional Development Training Conference** in Delavan, Wyoming, on September 4-6, sponsored by the Southwest Training Center, (312) 353-3297; and **The Residential Workshop for Administrative Support Staff** in Ocean City, Maryland, on August 27-30, sponsored by the Northeast Training Center, (215) 861-4707.

Just-in-Time Learning Suites, a new distance education series from the Graduate School, offers students developmental training in business and professional skills via the Web. Each suite contains several learning modules. For more information on all 29 suites, visit www.grad.usda.gov/LearningSuites or call (202) 314-3630.

Customized Spanish Course Helps Representatives Reach Constituents

In April, six congressional representatives, Gene Green, (D-Texas); Martin Frost, (D-Texas); Nick Lampson, (D-Texas); Betty McCollum, (D-Minnesota); George Miller, (D-California); and Janice Schakowsky, (D-Illinois), gathered in Minority Leader Richard Gephardt's office to receive Certificates of Accomplishment in Spanish Level I from Graduate School Executive Director Jerry Ice. The Graduate School's Evening Program's Foreign Language Department delivered the customized program to these congressional leaders as part of an ongoing partnership that began in 1999.

"It's been real successful for those of us who have been attending on a regular basis. We're not fluent in Spanish. It gives each of us a more comfortable level when dealing with Spanish, particularly the three of us from Texas, and George Miller from California," says Green. Learning Spanish is becoming increasingly important for representatives who want to reach all their constituents, especially in states such as Texas, where more than 60 percent of the constituency speaks Spanish.

The Graduate School's program, which was designed by Dr. Maria Wilmeth, program manager of the Foreign Language Department, is effectively geared for adults who need to enhance their language skills. Says Green: "I've had Spanish in high school, even at the college level, but I found the *Destinos* program to be more user-friendly. It's easier when you are trying to learn a language with this type of program—you go for what interests you—rather than chapter by chapter. Also, we had a great professor—he was good and understanding." Graduate School instructor Basil Malish taught the representatives.

Customized Spanish was first delivered on Capitol Hill in 1999 when Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-Texas) wanted to improve her Spanish to better communicate with her constituents. She gathered a group of other interested

legislators and asked the Graduate School for assistance. That first group included 12 representatives. Also in 1999, the late Senator Paul Coverdell (R-Georgia) requested a specialized Spanish course from the Graduate School, because he dealt with Latin America as part of his committee duties.

Each year since then, the Evening Program's Foreign Language Department has responded by sending an instructor to congressional offices to deliver customized Spanish instruction. "With Congressman Green and the others in his group we started once a week for an hour and half, sometimes twice a week and made adjustments for hectic schedules, congressional

recess, times when members had to go vote," says Wilmeth. "Senator Charles E. Schumer (D-New York) is receiving one-on-one instruction separately, since he is at an advanced level and can only meet at a different time."

During the certificate presentation, Ice congratulated each of the representatives, "We're pleased that six members from Congress chose to 'return to school' through our 'Spanish on the Hill' program. Our language courses at the Graduate School, USDA have been a hallmark of excellence for the school." Donald Shandler, director of the Continuing Education Division and Evening Programs, introduced Ice and made the opening remarks, "I knew the program would be a success because of the excellent instructor, rigorous course design and energy that the representatives would bring to the learning experience." For more information on this and other foreign language programs, contact Dr. Maria Wilmeth at (202) 314-3658.



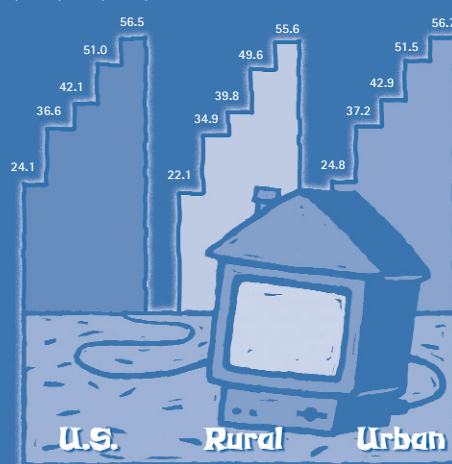
Betty McCollum (D-Minnesota), Martin Frost (D-Texas) and Gene Green (D-Texas) brush up on their language skills during a "Spanish on the Hill" class.



The congressional "students" received certificates for completing the Spanish program. Shown here left to right are: Gene Green (D-Texas), Graduate School Executive Director Dr. Jerry Ice, Martin Frost (D-Texas), Nick Lampson (D-Texas), George Miller (D-California), Janice Schakowsky (D-Illinois), Graduate School instructor Basil Malish and Betty McCollum (D-Minnesota).

Rural Computer Use Keeps Pace with Urban

Percentage of U.S. households with a computer by U.S., rural, urban locales for 1994, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001.



Source: NTIA and ESA, U.S. Department of Commerce, using U.S. Bureau of the Census data and supplements, www.esa.gov and www.bls.census.gov.



Pueblo Zuni Visit Graduate School to Learn about Certified Public Management

Staff from the Graduate School will travel to the Zuni reservation in New Mexico to deliver customized courses on-site.

In May, Governor Malcom B. Bowekaty of the Pueblo Zuni of New Mexico and 21 of his executive staff members toured the Graduate School’s facilities in Washington, D.C. to kick off their participation in the Certified Public Managers (CPM) Program. Special Programs staff customized the program for the Pueblo Zuni to include a week-long orientation in Washington. After the orientation program in Washington the Pueblo Zuni staff will spend the next 18 months taking courses on their reservation in Zuni, New Mexico. Faculty and staff from the Graduate School will travel to deliver the customized courses, which are based on the CPM curriculum. The Graduate School is the only federal entity to deliver this training, which results in certification as a public manager.

The Pueblo Zuni initiated the contact with the Graduate School. “The Pueblo Zuni’s Human Resources officer saw the program on our Web page and gave Steve Kennedy a call,” says Norma Ford, program administrator. “We’ve been delighted by the challenge of customizing the CPM program for them. It’s rigorous, taught in English, with testing every six weeks as they move into new competency areas.” The curriculum closely follows the Certified Public Managers agenda, which is described on the Graduate School’s Web site. For more information, contact Norma Ford at (202) 314-3460.

NEWSbriefs

Congratulations to Sean Hoover and Tammy Bolden, recipients of outstanding team-work awards presented by the NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center’s Human Resources’ Office. They were recognized for their contribution and dedication to the team that developed the Office of Human Resources course catalog. Hoover is a program specialist with the NASA/Headquarters Project, and Bolden is a program assistant with the NASA/Goddard Project.

A live satellite broadcast from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta got off the ground with administrative and technical assistance from Special Programs. The discussion, “Moving Environmental Health Practices into the 21st Century,” was broadcast throughout North America and Alaska. For more information, contact Deborah Howie at (202) 314-3458.

Welcome to the Graduate School’s Capital Campus. Beginning Fall 2002, Evening Programs will offer classes in two new locations—the National Capital YMCA and the Academy for Educational Development. In all, 17 Partners in Education provide classroom space at facilities for Evening Programs course offerings. For a complete list of these locations and organizations, consult the Evening Programs course catalog.

In winter 2002, Evening Programs’ Foreign Language Department began to pilot placement tests in French, German and Spanish. Prepared and delivered online by Brigham Young University, the tests are first adapted and calibrated to the Graduate School’s courses in these languages. More than 400 students—many who are foreign—have tested so far, mostly in Spanish. The tests range from 15 to 35 minutes, and students receive immediate feedback regarding their placement level. Evening Programs plans to offer a test in Russian. “The Graduate School is happy to respond to the needs of the students wanting to take foreign language courses with us,” according to Maria Wilmeth, foreign language program manager. For more information, contact Wilmeth at (202) 314-3658.

New Course Addresses Federal Telework Mandate

For many federal employees in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, a 70-minute commute is a common scenario. In 2001 Congress addressed this problem. To ease traffic congestion, decrease air pollution and offer employees workplace flexibility while increasing productivity, Congress passed the Federal Telework Mandate, Public Law 106-346, Section 359. This act requires federal agencies to establish policies for eligible employees to participate in telecommuting “to the maximum extent possible without diminished employee performance.” This immediately applied to 25 percent of the workforce that was eligible to telecommute. Presently, more than 75,000 federal workers telecommute; two-thirds of those are full-time telecommuters.



For supervisors and managers it is often necessary to learn a new style of management — one that emphasizes results. To smoothly implement the transition to telecommuting, the Graduate School, USDA designed a one-day training course, Telework: The Role of Supervisors and Managers. This course examines how to identify positions for teleworking, how to manage employees who telework, how to craft teleworking agreements and which management styles are conducive for a geographically dispersed staff. It also discusses such benefits as conserving resources and improving job performance and the quality of family life.

Telework: The Role of Supervisors and Managers
Course Code: MGMT9013D
CEU: 0.6
Tuition: \$325
November 1, Atlanta, Ga.

This one-day course is offered as both an open enrollment and an on-site session. Note: This course was previously called Telecommuting—the Role of Supervisors and Managers (MGMT9003D).

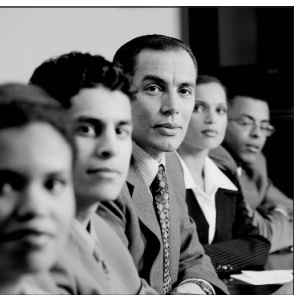


Graduate School Team Wins TOC Award for Learning Technology

An eight-member team from the Graduate School was awarded the Training Officers Conference (TOC) Annual Distinguished Service Award for Learning Technology on

June 11. This is the first time that the Graduate School has received an award for learning technology. Pictured from left to right are: Harry Jenkins, program manager; Judy Tabachow, senior program manager; Ronald MacNab, director, Technology Learning Services (TLS); Candy Bair, program manager; and Lynn Edwards, deputy executive director of the Graduate School. Not pictured are: Anthony Gutierrez, director, Regional Programs; Jean Mahoney, disability compliance manager with the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Agriculture; and Mario Romero, technology learning specialist, formerly with the Graduate School and now with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Over a span of two years, this team successfully developed a customized e-Learning course, Civil Rights Overview, which was delivered online to 66,000 employees over a period of eight months. The online completion rate was remarkable—83.5 percent. An additional 34,000 were trained through hard copy, CD-ROM, Spanish or Braille versions of the course. The development of this course required the team members to work closely with civil rights experts, coordinate delivery with representatives of 47 departmental agencies and conduct pilot tests to refine the three learning modules. For more information on distance education, call TLS at (202) 314-3630.



Training Leaders for the Future

The Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (LEI) is the Graduate School’s tool for measuring a candidate’s potential leadership qualities and assessing leadership training needs. Recently revised by the Special Programs staff at the Graduate School, the LEI is a 360-degree assessment instrument that, with input from supervisors and peers, provides a complete picture of an individual’s leadership skills and deficiencies. Individuals are assessed against the 27 leadership competencies that comprise the five SES Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) defined by the Office of Personnel Management. Another component of the LEI is Gap Analysis, which measures an individual’s job skills against what is required in the current or target job. The LEI can also outline an action plan for individual development.

The LEI can be administered on-site, by phone, e-mail, fax, paper or on its Web site at www.grad.usda.gov/lei. For more information, call (202) 314-3464.

GATI Partners with Industry Leaders to Offer Computer-Assisted Audit Techniques Courses

The Government Audit Training Institute (GATI) has partnered with two audit software providers, Audimation, Inc. and ACL Services, Ltd., to launch a series of hands-on training courses in Computer-Assisted Audit Techniques (CAAT). The CAAT courses will be available in July 2002 and are designed for government auditors.

The CAAT courses, which are part of the Automated Auditor Training Series, are: Computer Assisted Audit Tools and Techniques, IDEA 2002 Software for Government Auditors (introductory and advanced) and Introduction to ACL for Windows. CAAT courses are designed to increase the efficiency and productivity of government auditors and financial managers and are directly incorporated into auditor and manager auditing programs.

GATI and the audit software providers formed their partnership to help government agencies maximize their use of this leading-edge technology. While most agencies and organizations recognize the value of CAAT, many resist incorporating new tools into their auditing programs. Carolyn Newman, president of Audimation, Inc., explains why: "The programs many organizations use may not have anticipated the technology now available. It takes a leap to get electronic tools into the audit work." The Automated Auditor Training Series is specifically focused on meeting this challenge by giving government auditors and financial managers training not only on how to use these tools but also on how to understand the environments in which they are auditing. Newman adds, "With the power of data analysis, auditors are only limited by their imaginations."

Learning to use auditing software allows agencies to do more with less—a strategic advantage in an era of downsizing and restructuring. "The CAAT skills included in this training series are geared specifically to streamlining audit processes and expanding capabilities," says Peter Aliferis, director of GATI. In addition, this software gives auditors and financial managers a built in "sniff test" to determine if further auditing is needed. CAAT instructors focus on how government auditors can apply these tools to individual and organizational audits. Demonstrations allow students to gain experience with new techniques. The courses cover several topics, including generalized audit software, utility software, test data, application software tracing and mapping and audit expert systems.

The CAAT course series will be offered on both an open enrollment and an on-site contract basis. For more information visit GATI on the Web at www.grad.usda.gov/gati, or call (800) 326-7813.

“With the power of data analysis, auditors are only limited by their imaginations.”

—Carolyn Newman, president of Audimation, Inc.

FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY

Leigh Geiger



Faculty Excellence Award Winner

Lively and engaging in the classroom, Leigh Geiger has taught at the Graduate School since the early 1990s. Previously she worked for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

She enjoys teaching Web page development, ColdFusion and Dreamweaver. She also teaches courses in database development and project management. In each of her classes, she incorporates the Internet: "I have a Web page for every class. I encourage students to research online for books and newsletters. I want them to have the tools to be self-sufficient." Geiger feels students should be familiar with Internet resources in order to continue learning after class. Geiger, who has a special education background, uses various sensory modalities to appeal to all types of students. Rather than using printed handouts, she asks students to take notes: "I find they learn better when they have to write it down." Geiger sees a trend in technology training in the area of e-Learning, particularly interactive courses online. In fact, some of her presentations have been videotaped for online purposes. Geiger lives in suburban Virginia and spends her spare time with her grandsons, ages two and four.

New Oracle Textbook

Dan Benjamin, a teacher at the Graduate School for more than 10 years, has recently published a textbook, *Oracle: OCP Oracle9i Database: New Features for Administrators' Exam Guide* (Exam 1Z0-03). According to Benjamin, "This is the most current release for these exams, which were changed a few months ago." Benjamin, who is a technology management consultant for several government agencies, has also published two books on Java. For more information, contact the author at dantastic@erols.com.

Technology TIPS

INTERNET TIP: You can save time by putting quotes around phrases such as "distance education" when searching on the Internet. With quotes, the search engine will find only that exact phrase; without them, it will flag the two words even if they appear separately.

Source: *Using the Web to Compete in a Global Marketplace*, by Browning Rockwell

MEETINGS TIP: To make the best use of technology for your next meeting, ask the right question about why you want to use it. Wrong question: How can we use videoconferencing? Right question: What technology will best help our staff communicate and work together?

Source: *Cybermeeting: How to Link People and Technology in Your Organization*, by James L. Creighton and James W.R. Adams

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The demand for computer skills is on the rise. Computer occupations are projected to grow faster than any other field from 2000 to 2010, according to the Department of Labor's *2002-2003 Occupational Outlook Handbook*. In fact, eight of the top 10 occupations predicted to have the greatest employment growth are in computer fields. At the top of the list is the computer

systems engineer, an occupation that will experience a 100 percent growth in employment; the number of computer support specialists will grow 97 percent by 2010.

Is the Graduate School positioned to meet the demand for technology that this growth will create? I believe we have a head start. Through Evening Programs (EP) alone, students can take courses toward information technology certificates in several areas, including three new certificate programs: Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator, Windows 2000 LAN and A+ Certification. Through the Center for Applied Technology (CAT), students can choose from more than seven cutting-edge certificate programs, including the Systems Engineering Certificate, Information Security Specialist, Network+ Certification, WebMaster Certification and the Cisco Networking Program.

The quality and standards used to develop these programs are rigorous, and the training is hands-on and relevant. CAT's Cisco Networking Program, for instance, uses an innovative e-Learning model, which combines Web-based, instructor-led learning and hands-on labs. What is exciting is that, in this case, technology is both what we teach and how we deliver our training. At the Graduate School, technology is as much a subject to learn as it is a learning tool.

Distance education is another way the Graduate School is using technology to teach about technology, along with a host of other subjects. Several Graduate School units offer distance education. For instance, Special Programs is developing satellite- and video-based programs. And through the National Independent Study Center, students can register for CD-ROM-based accounting, communications skills and human resources management programs. We have more than 90 courses available online, ranging from Chinese Business Culture through Evening and Weekend Programs to Legal Ethics through the Correspondence Program. Many of these courses are eligible for credit or are part of our certificate programs.

What ensures that the quality of these new and versatile offerings will remain consistent? Our excellent staff and faculty who design and teach these courses, programs and certificates. We are all a part of the future of technology training. It will be an excellent one here at the Graduate School.

Dr. Jerry Ice

New Evening Programs Technology Certificates

In Fall 2002, Evening Programs will unveil three new certificate programs: Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator, Windows 2000 LAN and A+ Certification. These programs were developed in conjunction with the Graduate School's daytime computer training division (CAT). Program Manager Dr. Stefan Gunther says that this "was done in an effort to bring the School's course offerings in line with emerging quality standards and professional certifications in the IT field."

The Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator (MCSA) Certification is designed for those who are seeking careers as IT systems administration professionals and are responsible for managing and troubleshooting existing network and system environments based on the Microsoft Windows 2000 platform. The Windows 2000 LAN Certificate Program is designed to give students the basics of the Windows 2000 LAN operating system. The A+ Certification Program provides students with an industry-recognized certification for computer service professionals. For more information on these new technology certificates, contact Stefan Gunther at (202) 314-3652 or visit the Graduate School's Web site at www.grad.usda.gov.



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Board Members Honored



Graduate School board members Donna Beecher and Keith Collins were honored this spring for their outstanding service to the Graduate School. Dr. Joseph Jen, chairman of the General Administration Board and Department of Agriculture undersecretary for Research, Education and Economics, and Jerry Ice, executive director of the Graduate School, presented the awards. Beecher is retiring as director of Human Resources Management at the Department of Agriculture and from the Graduate School Board. Collins, chief economist at the Department of Agriculture, was honored for his dedication and outstanding service as acting chairman.

Take note....



WebMaster Training Prepares Students for the Future

Web professionals are required to keep pace with new and emerging technologies and to make frequent changes to the Web sites they design and manage. The Graduate School's WebMaster Certification Program is a two-level, 18-week, six-part training series in Web technologies. Offered by the Center for Applied Technology (CAT), the program is designed for professionals who work in the rapidly changing world of Web site design, architecture and management. Students also gain a team perspective on organizing Web functions. For more information on the prerequisites, tracks and options for testing out of certain courses, visit the Graduate School's Web site at www.usda.grad.gov.



2003 Nationwide Training Catalog Available Now

To receive a copy of the new Nationwide Catalog, call (888) 744-GRAD.



New Certificate of Accomplishment in e-Government

The new e-Management Certificate Program is designed for all federal employees needing an orientation to e-Government initiatives, including security and privacy. Students gain a broader understanding of the nature and purpose of an agency's Information Resources Management (IRM) program and its critical role in the customer-focused, results-oriented, high-performance organization. The certificate includes three required courses and a minimum of two electives. For more information visit the Graduate School's Web site at www.grad.usda.gov.



Update Your Technology Skills Dreamweaver

This 15-hour course, offered through Evening Programs, uses the most powerful Web development tool currently on the market, Dreamweaver's WYSIWYG editor. Students also learn a more traditional HTML approach using HomeSite and how to link pages and create complex and dynamic Web sites. This course is included in Evening Program's Web Development and Design Certificate Program.

August 16 - September 13, 2002
Washington, D.C.
Tuition: \$289
Course Code: COMP8826E

Information Resources Management for Federal Agencies

This four-day course presents the basic concepts and principles of information resources management within the framework of the primary laws and policies governing application and management of information and information technology by federal agencies.

August 5-8, 2002, Washington, D.C.
Tuition: \$625
Course Code: INFO8300D

Project Management for Information Systems and Technology Initiatives

This four-day course is designed for those who are involved with information systems creation or deployment. The course focuses on program and project management in an information technology (IT) and information systems (IS) context and examines the IT management reforms as mandated by the Clinger-Cohen Act, including best management practices such as the CMM model and Raines' Rules.

September 9-12, 2002, Washington, D.C.
Tuition: \$625
Course Code: INFO7310D